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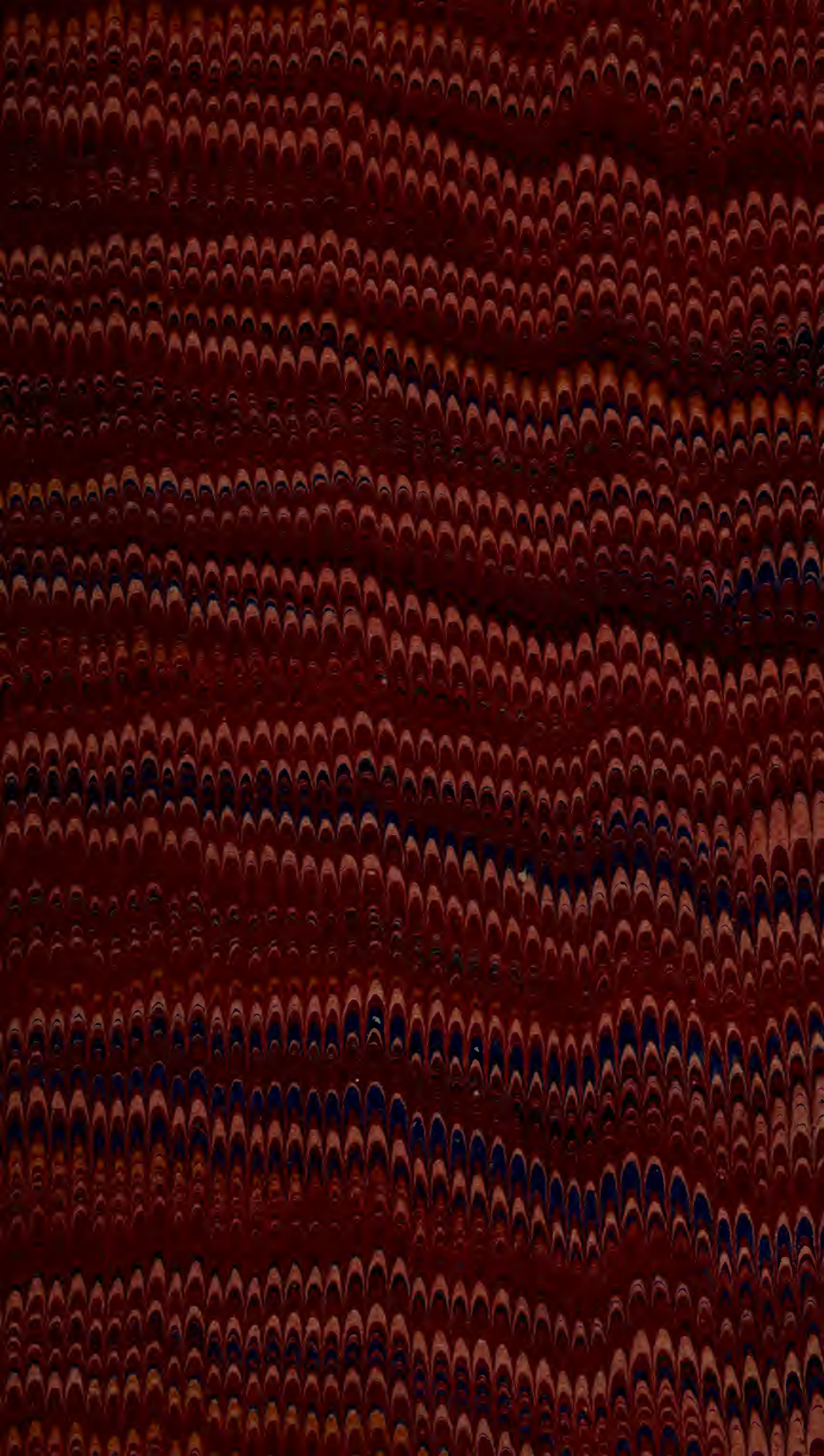
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



THE FIRST FRUITS.

A Scriptural Inquiry

INTO

THE TIME AND SEASON

OF

THE FIRST RESURRECTION,

AND

THE CHANGE OF THOSE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN.

*by Alexander Porter
of Philadelphia*

Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.—1 COR. xv. 15.

Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established: believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.—2 CHRON. xx. 20.

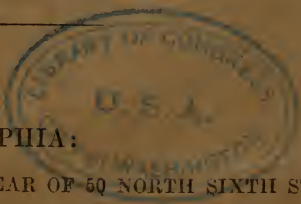
He that testifieth these things, saith,

"SURELY, I COME QUICKLY."

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THE FIRST RESURRECTION

AND

REMOVAL OF THE CHURCH.

“WHY, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?” Job xxiv. 1.

The question here propounded by Job to his friends, might, with equal propriety, be asked at the present day. It is admitted by many that we are now on the eve of some great, universal, and important change. “Men’s hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth;” and yet *professors* as well as non-professors, are alike ignorant of those great events that are coming upon all the world, to try all them that dwell upon the face of the earth. The future is enveloped in gloom and darkness; not a single ray of light gleams on the horizon. This, as far as the unconverted are concerned, is not to be wondered at, inasmuch as the word of divine truth declares of the unregenerate: “For man also knoweth not *his time*: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, *so* are the sons of men snared in an evil time when it falleth suddenly upon them.” Eccl. ix. 12. But this ought not to be the case with those who know God, and it will not be the case with those who are willing to believe God’s most holy word; for that word declares, that although “Evil men understand not judgment, they that seek the Lord understand ALL THINGS.” “Whoso keepeth the commandments shall know no evil thing, and a wise man’s heart discerneth both TIME and judgment.” “Because to every purpose there is time

and judgment." Eccl. viii. 5, 6. God has never visited the world with his judgments, without first revealing his secret purposes to his servants, and causing them to give even those whom he designed visiting in judgments due warning; so that he has on all occasions left the world without excuse. He has ever vindicated his character as the "Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and of great kindness," who willeth not the death of the sinner. He has on all occasions warned man of impending danger, and afforded him an opportunity of repenting, and flying to him for refuge; and as this has been his character through all the past, so his word, which can never fail, stands pledged for the future. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." When God was about to destroy Sodom, his inquiry was: Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? No, he could not; for Abraham feared the Lord, and believed and obeyed his word; and although Abraham dwelt in the plains of Mamre, far removed from the scenes of destruction, and God had sent his angels to warn Lot, yet Sodom could not be destroyed till Abraham had been apprized of it. "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos iii. 6, 7. And surely whatever secrets the Lord has been pleased to reveal to his servants the prophets, "belong to *us* and to our children." "For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." "The Scriptures cannot be broken." "God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not bring it to pass?" And yet, strange as it may appear, in the face of the plainest and most positive declarations of God in his word, we are constantly pained to hear even those who profess to know God, and to love the appearing of his Son, and to be waiting for his return from heaven, declare that a knowledge of the time of that return is wisely hidden from us, and we can know nothing of it with any degree of cer-

tainty. To all such I would address the inquiry of Job: "Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?" Job xxiv. 1. Why is it? I presume no one will attempt to deny, but that the Almighty knows the time of his judgments. "For I am God, and there is none else: I am God, and there is none like me. Declaring the END from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isa. xlv. 9, 10. If it be a truth that "the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret to his servants the prophets," and if "we have the more sure word of prophecy, unto which we do well that we take heed as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise," then surely we may discover, by a prayerful examination of the Scriptures of truth, something concerning the time of our visitation. This, at least, appears to me to be in strict accordance with the teachings of the Holy Ghost in the word of God. O for faith to cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and to believe only the word of the living God, to let God's word be true, though every man should be found to be a liar! We purpose, therefore, depending upon the promised aid of the Holy Ghost ("He shall guide you into all truth; and he shall show you things to come;") to deliver our feeble testimony, despised as it may be, give a reason for the hope we have, and show from the Scriptures of truth that the time of the church's deliverance may be known, and that it is the duty of every child of God, but more especially of those who profess to love the appearing of Jesus, to search and inquire diligently, and to KNOW when their redemption is near. Surely, a subject into which prophets, apostles, and even angels have desired to look, and have inquired diligently, is a subject into which we may look and inquire also with propriety and profit.

There is one important truth we must ever bear in mind, in all our investigations, viz.: the declaration of our blessed Lord Jesus: "The Scriptures cannot be broken." We must, therefore, take the Scriptures as a whole, and by searching them, and comparing scripture with scripture,

find out the true meaning of every passage, rather than by taking, as is too frequently the case, one or two isolated passages as the foundation of our faith and hope. In the important inquiry upon which we have entered, we do not expect to be able to remove every objection urged against the position we have taken with respect to knowing the time; but rather to give a reason for the hope that is within us with meekness and fear. 1 Pet. iii. 15, 16. For God has never yet revealed his truth to man in such a manner as to compel him to believe and receive it against his own will. Those who have wished to bring God's word to the standard of their own opinions, have ever found a wide field in which to doubt, and plausible arguments to satisfy themselves that they were right in their conclusions, and that it would be presumption to implicitly believe God's word, his more sure word of prophecy, even though he has by the Holy Ghost assured us that we do well to take heed thereto, as unto a light shining in a dark place. While, on the other hand, all those who have, and do still wish to believe and trust his holy word, have ever found an everlasting Rock on which to rest their faith and hope. The word of the Lord is a "tried word," "and very sure." Men are not necessarily in darkness, that the day of the Lord should overtake them as a thief; and yet we see not only the world, but the professing church moving on to that great and solemn day, apparently entirely unconscious of its approach, although the bursting buds of the trees in spring are not more unmistakable indications of the approach of summer, than the signs of these last times are of the speedy return of our blessed Lord. And yet "Who hath believed the word of the Lord?" All past history confirms the fact, that men will not receive the truth, nor believe the word of the Lord. Who believed Noah, although he gave a visible testimony of one hundred and twenty years, by the construction of the ark? Who believed Moses and the prophets? Who believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God, notwithstanding all the prophecies that were fulfilled in and by him, and the miracles he wrought at his first advent? Is there any more faith now? "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find

faith on the earth?" Faith in him as the Messiah is not now the question—the time for that is passed; but faith in his coming to reign as King over the earth, which he has already purchased. The character in which he was rejected at his crucifixion is that which he will assume at his second coming. "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." It is faith in this great truth that is required now.

Perhaps in the whole Bible there is no passage more frequently referred to, as an objection to all inquiry, in connexion with this subject, than the one found in Mark xiii. 32: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, BUT THE FATHER." Mark, this passage does not affirm that no man ever shall know that day and hour, but simply, at the time the Saviour spake no man knew that day. For if this passage proves that all men are to remain perfectly ignorant of Christ's second appearing until he descends from heaven, then it also proves that the angels who shall attend him, and even the Son of God himself, will have no knowledge of this great and momentous event *till it takes place*, and they find themselves in this world. Now is there one of the many thousands of those who use this verse as an objection to searching for the time, (as the disciples did at the period the Saviour used these words,) who really believes that the Son of God will not know the time of his second appearing? I think not; and yet this passage just as much proves that *He* will remain ignorant of the time, as it does that *we* shall remain ignorant of that time. We must, therefore, apply the instructions given by Paul to the Corinthians, compare scripture with scripture, and thus endeavour to understand this and all other passages by making them harmonize with other scriptures. By referring to the parallel passages in Matt. xxiv. 3, and Luke, we find the disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, asking him PRIVATELY, THREE separate and distinct questions: "Tell us when shall these things be, (the destruction of the temple, of which he had been speaking,) and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world;" or, more properly, the end of this age or dispensation,

which will be brought to a close by his second coming. The Lord Jesus proceeds to answer each of these three questions, so far as he could do so without breaking the Scriptures, which he himself had declared could not be broken; for he came not to destroy or make void the prophets, but to fulfil them. He here gave them a prophecy of the events which should take place in connexion with the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, and a particular sign that should occur previous to that event, by observing which, all those who believed and obeyed his word might deliver themselves and thus escape; and we are told that although eleven hundred thousand persons were destroyed in that dreadful siege, not one Christian perished. The first question was thus fully answered, because they were personally interested in it; but the subjects embraced in the other two did not concern the disciples so much as the first, for the Lord well knew that before his second coming they would fall asleep; and we must not forget that "they asked him, PRIVATELY, tell us when." If the Lord had told them when he would come again, and when the end of the age should be, the Scriptures would have been broken, for the angel, in answering the question of Daniel, xii. 8, "O my Lord, what is the latter end of these things?" (a question similar in its character to that asked by the disciples,) had told him, as our Lord well knew: "Go thy way, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." This period not having then arrived, the Lord Jesus could not reveal the time to the disciples without breaking the Scriptures of truth, as it is *only at the time of the end* that it is promised the wise SHALL understand. So that in the teaching of Jesus we see a most perfect harmony, especially if we read this passage in Mark according to the most correct and literal rendering of it, and the one most in harmony with all the other portions of God's word: Of that day and hour *maketh known* no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only; but inasmuch as the Father knoweth the day and hour, he will communicate it at his own appointed time; for he has declared, that although "the words are closed and sealed up unto the time of the end,

many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise *shall* understand." Dan. xii. If our blessed Lord had then communicated to his disciples a knowledge of the time of his coming, the words of the angel to Daniel would have been proved untrue, and the Scriptures would have been broken; so that instead of this often repeated passage being against those who endeavour, by searching diligently the word of God, to know the time, it is found to be in perfect agreement with those passages that declare "that the wise shall understand," and that "the Lord God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret to his servants the prophets." There is, also, another argument which might be noticed here, viz.: That it was reserved as the peculiar office of the Holy Ghost to *reveal things in the future*; but he was not yet given. We will leave this point for the present, and pass on to the passage found in Acts i. 6, 7. The same thought still occupied the minds of the disciples after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. "When they, therefore, were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou, at this time, restore again the kingdom to Israel?" this was the last question of the disciples to the risen Saviour, previous to his departure to the bosom of his Father, where he must remain "until the completion of the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." How appropriate, how reasonable that they should wish to know when that glory, of which he had so often and so recently spoken to them, should be manifested. Acts i. 3. He had since his resurrection, on various occasions, opened their minds to understand the Scriptures more fully concerning not only his sufferings but the glory which must follow; and, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he had expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself and the kingdom of God. And now, following the examples of the prophets of old, who had searched and inquired diligently respecting "the time of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory that should follow," they also were anxious to know when his kingdom should be esta-

blished. They really desired information concerning the time of the glorious Advent, and were not (as is too often the case now,) reluctant to receive it. The love of the disciples for their Saviour rendered his absence very difficult to bear, and the thought which, of all others, at this solemn and interesting moment, seemed to occupy their whole mind, was one which, of all others, is the least interesting to professed disciples at the present day. "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" They did not wish to think of his absence, but only of his presence and glory. Professing Christians, at the present day, desire rather his absence than his presence; they are more willing to contemplate Christ humiliated and crucified, than Christ exalted and glorified; they had rather speak of him as the Man of Sorrows, despised and rejected of men, than to contemplate him as coming to reign, King of kings, and Lord of lords. They had rather think of him as an intercessor than as a present deliverer, the resurrection and the life, coming to judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom; and instead of rejoicing in the expectation of his *speedy* return, they more willingly receive the vain traditions of men, and believe that the Saviour will not return to this earth for a thousand years at least. You may talk of the return of Jesus, only do not presume to say that you know, or even hope, that it is near at hand. Do not ask, as did the disciples, "Tell us WHEN shall these things be? What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of this dispensation, or wilt thou at THIS TIME restore the kingdom to Israel?"—raise thy loved ones, who have so long been sleeping in the dust of the earth; change thy waiting ones, who love thy appearing; bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end; establish righteousness, justice, and truth in the earth, and bring deliverance "to the whole creation, groaning and travailing in pain together until now. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Oh, no! These are truths forgotten and forbidden at the present day, and the Christian that desires to imitate the disciples in their anxiety to know the time when these blessed hopes shall be realized, is considered either a fa-

natic or presumptuous. How different the Saviour's answer to the disciples! "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Ver. 8. I would here ask what was it they were to receive power to do, when the Holy Ghost should be given? If it was not to understand those things about which they had so anxiously and repeatedly inquired—the times and seasons of the coming of the Lord to restore again the kingdom to Israel, and when he himself shall reign as King. The Spirit had been promised to the apostles long before. And what was the Spirit's particular work, in reference to all that our Lord had previously foretold? It was that of a remembrancer and teacher. "He shall teach you ALL THINGS, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." John xiv. 26. "Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into ALL TRUTH; for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: AND HE WILL SHOW YOU THINGS TO COME." "All things that the Father hath are mine. Therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and show it unto you." John xvi. 13, 15. If, then, the times and the seasons heretofore belonged to the Father, and he had held them in his own power hitherto, we have here the promise of Jesus that the Holy Ghost shall impart the power to understand them also. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13. If it be true that the Holy Ghost is to abide with the church, and to dwell in the believer, during the absence of, and until the return of our Lord, and if it is his office to "show us things to come," and we can adopt the language of Paul just quoted, then, indeed, we shall find "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." Ps. xxv. 14. And that

the Lord God will do nothing without first revealing his secret to his servants through the prophets.

Having now answered the objections founded on these two passages of Scripture, we are prepared for the question: "Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his day?" Let us, therefore, examine a few of the passages which teach us that we may know something of the time. 1 Peter i. 10: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls; of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the (time) of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. What is the end of our faith, what the salvation of our souls, but the appearing of Jesus, to clothe us with glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life; for we are now only saved by hope, but at the appearing of Jesus we shall receive the end or consummation of our hope. When he comes in his glory, we shall be glorified together with him. What a blessed thought! How earnestly we should inquire, and diligently search for the time when faith shall end in sight!

If we really loved the absent Saviour, and longed for his return, in order that all our hopes, as well as his, should be consummated, should we object to inquiry for the time? Should we not rather be found asking: "How long, O Lord, how long?" Did the prophets of old inquire how long? Yes; we find Daniel, "a man greatly beloved," inquiring not only the time of the sufferings of Christ, but also the time of the glory that should follow. He was told that seventy weeks were cut off from the two thousand three hundred days, "after sixty and nine of which Messiah was to be cut off." Dan. ix. But in the twelfth chapter we are brought to the period of the resurrection. Verse 2. In the fourth verse, Daniel is directed to shut up the words and seal the book to the time of the end, when he is told, many shall have searched diligently, and knowledge shall be increased. But as if the assurance here given, that knowledge should be increased at the time of the end, was not sufficient to satisfy

the bright intelligences sent to communicate with Daniel on this important and interesting subject, we find them inquiring, in the 6th verse: "How long?" or at how great a distance to the end of these wonders. The answer is given in the 7th verse; and in the 8th verse we find the beloved Daniel still not satisfied with this answer, again inquiring: "O, my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" He is then told, as the Saviour told his disciples, that the full understanding of these great truths was reserved for another time; or, in the language of 1 Peter i. 12; "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you. . . . Which things the angels desired to look into." "And he said, (9th ver.) Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed TILL the TIME of the end." "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall attend, but the wise shall understand." Understand what? What is the subject into which the angels and Daniel are so earnestly inquiring? Is it not the time of the glory of Christ, when he shall come to awake them that sleep in the dust of the earth? "And they that be wise shall shine as the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Undoubtedly it is; for there is no other subject either introduced or inquired into here, but the subject of time; if this be so, we have the positive assurance that AT THE TIME OF THE END many shall search diligently, knowledge shall increase, and the WISE SHALL UNDERSTAND.

Josephus observes, "that Daniel not only prophesied of things to come, like the other prophets, but hath also determined the time wherein these things should happen." The great object of the prophecy of Daniel would appear to be to bring us down to, and distinctly point out, the period of, as well as the events in connexion with, the second coming of our Lord Jesus. This prophecy was given more for the benefit of the generation that should witness the closing scenes of the present dispensation, than for any other in past time; and hence the propriety of its remaining closed up and sealed to past generations until

the time of the end. Now that the generation that is to witness the scenes of the last days is on the stage of action, the prophecy is unsealed, and may be understood.

Christ suffered at the exact time appointed beforehand, and revealed by Daniel: "For according to the time, Christ died for the ungodly." Rom. v. 6. John xiii. 1. "Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father." How often are we told that "They sought to take him, but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come." John vii. 30; viii. 20. Thus was the arrangement of time fulfilled when Christ suffered, and the time of the glory having been revealed in the same sure word of prophecy, that event will just as certainly take place at the exact time appointed. "For there is a time for every purpose, and for every work." Eccl. iii. 17. And if prophets, and apostles, and angels, have so earnestly desired to look into these things, and have inquired, "How long, O Lord, how long?" surely it cannot be wrong for us to follow their example, especially, as "it was revealed unto them, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister." For "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, (Oh what a glorious day-dawn!) and the day star arise in your hearts." "For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter i. 21. If prophecy can only be understood when fulfilled, how can it be said to be a *light* in a dark place? What use is a light except in a dark place? Are prophetic events surrounded with darkness when fulfilled? When shall we learn to cease from man, and believe God's most holy and sure word? "Ye have made the word of God of none effect by your tradition." "Evil men understand not judgment; but they that seek the Lord understand all things." Prov. xxviii. 5. "That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee. Have I not written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge? That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words

of truth to them that send unto thee." Prov. xxii. 19 to 21. "The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come: Israel *shall know* it." Hosea ix. 7. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd, (or when I am argued with—margin.) And the Lord answered me, and said: Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." ("Many shall run to and fro, knowledge shall be increased, the wise shall understand." Dan. xii.) "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by faith." Hab. ii. 1 to 4. The just shall live by faith in the promises of God; his sure word shall be fulfilled. "And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of Man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, the days are prolonged, and every vision faileth." (Is not this proverb abroad in the land now? Are we not constantly told, you can know nothing of the time, because every calculation of the appointed time faileth?) "Tell them, therefore, thus saith the Lord God: I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision. For I am the Lord; I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall no more be prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord God." "Again, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of Man, behold, the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off. Therefore, say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord God." Ezek. xii. 21 to 28.

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth (or maketh known,) his secret to his servants the prophets." "Secret things belong unto the Lord; but the

things that he hath revealed belong to us and to our children." "For ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief."—(Unexpectedly.) What day is here referred to by the apostle? Surely the day of which he had just been speaking: "When the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The rapture of the church is not, then, to come upon us unexpectedly, as a thief. We need not be in darkness as to that day, if we will only watch. "Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Rev. iii. 3. "And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through." Mark xii. 39. Is not this good evidence that the time may, yea, that it will be known to the watching, waiting, believing ones? "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." Luke xvii. 26. It was so with Noah in regard to the flood; the definite time was revealed to him. "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Gen. vi. 3. But as the time was about expiring, God made a further revelation of the time to him. And having found him faithful and obedient to the instructions already given to him, "The Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous (faith is counted for righteousness) before me in this generation." "For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth." Gen. vii. 1 and 4. And is not the event for which we are looking of as much consequence to the world now, as was the flood to the antediluvians? Is it not vastly more so?

Are not the events to transpire at the second coming of our Lord in glory and majesty, of infinitely more importance? And shall those who, like Noah, believe God's word, "and do according unto all that the Lord commanded him," be left in darkness, for that day to overtake them as a thief? No, surely not. "If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Certainly, this implies that if we do watch, as it is our duty to do, in obedience to the commands of Jesus, we shall know the time, even as Noah did. When the second flood shall overwhelm the Second Apostacy, all, indeed, will not be destroyed, but all must pass through the Great Tribulation, except those who are in the Ark, who shall have the words addressed to them: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast; for behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." Isa. xxvi. 20, 21. Noah, in reality, did not pass through the flood: he was not *in* it, he was above it. The ungodly world lay below him in the deep, while he looked down in safety on the tumultuous waters. In the same Ark, not only the future germs of the human race were saved, but of all the tribes of the earth. Everything that exists at present was represented by the inhabitants of the Ark.

Noah is the type of the *elect* who "shall be counted worthy to escape all those things that are coming upon the earth, and to stand before the Son of Man," Luke xxi. 36, and who shall be saved from the day of the Lord. The Ark is the representative of the covenant of grace, by which they shall be saved. There was no security outside the Ark; those who stood the nearest perished equally with those who were furthest off. It was only by entering in that any were preserved. It is not by the profession of Christianity, by approaching however nearly to the Christian covenant that any shall be saved; it is only by entering in by faith in God's promises. All who remain outside, through unbelief, are equally exposed to the judgments of the day of the Lord. But within that

covenant there is perfect safety. All who are within, and obey the command, "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always," shall be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass. By the shelter of that covenant, not only man shall be saved, but the whole creation. Every beast, and bird, and insect has an unconscious part, according to its kind, in the covenant of redemption. The creation itself, the entire globe, is protected by that covenant. For the whole creation "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Above all—the elect. For the sake of the elect, the world is preserved, the sun shines, the rain falls, the whole system of nature is maintained. Remove them from the earth, and all the bonds of conservation break. Mercy departs along with them, restraining power is withdrawn, and mankind are left and given over to their own abandoned will. The elect are the GARRISON of the earth; it is their presence alone which keeps anarchy in check, and prevents the dismemberment of society. In the day that Noah entered into the Ark, the flood began. In the day when the elect shall be taken from the earth, the floodgates of Divine wrath shall be thrown open, and the last judgments shall begin. The saints, in security, shall look down upon those judgments as Noah looked down into the flood. But they shall have no part in that destruction. The covenant, like the Ark, secures them on every side safe from every danger; and when the flood has passed, when the judgments are abated, they shall come forth, like Noah from the Ark, to take possession of a new earth, "in which dwelleth righteousness." Noah knew the period of the flood, and preached it to the world, and prepared his Ark, notwithstanding the unbelief and derision of men. In doing this, he condemned the world "BY HIS FAITH," and saved himself and his family. But the people doubted, scoffed, and were destroyed. "So shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man."

Now that we have evidently arrived at the very eve of that time for which the primitive church so anxiously longed, and to which they so earnestly looked, many of the people of God appear as if they would rather have

lived in earlier times, and that instead of desiring to obtain a glorious transformation by being changed and "caught up in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," to meet the Lord in the air,—the hope held out by the apostle as the source of comfort to the Thessalonians, (1 Thess. iv. 18,) they would prefer submitting their mortal frame as a prey to the devourer death.

Had believers, in the first ages of the church, been made aware not merely of the events first to occur, but also of the time that would elapse, they would have burned with impatience and grieved for the delay. They, indeed, needed to be often reminded of the duty of the patient waiting for Christ; a frame of mind which, alas! it is now little necessary to inculcate. Nor is it difficult to discover the reason. Their attention was constantly directed to the return of Him in whom centered all their hopes, who is the object of faith; it was the frequent subject of fervent prayer; it was made available for every holy use by the inspired apostles and early Christians; it ministered consolation in adversity, and taught moderation in prosperity. The prospects which this doctrine reveals to the believer, armed him with a holy heroism which no sufferings could subdue, infused additional efficacy into reproof when it was required, and powerfully strengthened the whole tone of Christian morality.

Surely, if our affections were placed on the Saviour; if he was to us the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely; if we had none in heaven but him, or on earth that we desired in comparison with him, we also would desire his return, we should be willing to examine with prayerful attention every intimation that the time of his absence was fast drawing to a close, and that the time of our union to our blessed Head was at hand. We should long to see him as he is; we should be constantly praying, "Thy kingdom come." "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Oh why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Is it not the natural consequence of love to desire to be with the object of our love? and if the object of that love be at a distance, to count the days, and even the hours of that absence, until the time is expired. In all our natural affections, it is

with great difficulty that we patiently wait for the long expected union. Who blames us for counting the days and hours? No one. Only let the object of our love be an earthly relative or friend, it is all well, and very commendable and proper; but should the object of our love be Jesus, our precious Redeemer and Saviour, the case is altogether changed. What before was highly commendable and proper, is now fanaticism and presumption; the question of time is all-important when connected with any other subject than the appearing of our blessed Jesus, and our entrance upon the "undefiled inheritance," which is "reserved in heaven for all who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Let the fact be announced to any Christian, at the present day, that he has become the heir to an earthly estate, and what will be his first inquiry? Will he not inquire, with all possible eagerness, WHEN shall I enter on the possession of it? This is the principal question which concerns him, and the one in which he feels most interested. No danger of any presumption here. Oh no! It is a very proper inquiry, and one in which he is deeply concerned. Or, to illustrate this point still further: Let us suppose, for instance, a woman, whose husband is a long time absent from her in a distant land. She is possibly very diligent in the management of his affairs, and conducts herself with perfect outward propriety, but always breaks out into a passion whenever any one speaks to her of her husband's return. "Oh no," she says, "he cannot be coming yet. I expect to be much better off before he comes. I expect his estate under my management, to be much more extensive; if he were to come now, he would disarrange all my plans; besides, what is the use of thinking about his coming? I may die first, and that will be exactly the same as his coming to me." Let her asseverations of love and affection be what they may, you cannot believe otherwise than that her heart is alienated from her lord, and probably fixed upon another. Now, let us suppose another woman in the same situation. See her constantly reading his letters, and especially those parts of them which describe the TIME and the circumstances attendant on his return; hear her talk of it to her

children, and teaching them to look forward to it as the consummation of her, and their fondest wishes. Mark the silent scorn with which she treats a *judicious friend*, who would try to persuade her that there was no use in looking out for his return, for that he had never mentioned the month, far less the day or the hour when it was to take place. Though she may make no noisy protestations of her love; though she may speak but little about him, except to her children, and to those whose hearts are tuned in unison with her own, who can for a moment entertain a doubt of the real state of her affections? Let us apply the figure to ourselves. A dislike to hear of the NEARNESS of the coming of the Lord is a more decided proof of the affections of the religious world at large, and of every single member of it, being alienated from the LOVE of Jesus Christ, and therefore in an unholy, unsanctified, and consequently in an unprepared state for this glorious event, than all their noisy profession of love and attachment to Jesus, are to the contrary.

THE TIME WHEN THE CHURCH SHALL BE CAUGHT UP.

Having shown from the Scriptures of truth that the inquiry, "How long shall it be to the END of these wonders?" is a proper one for us who are living in that period in which it is declared, "the WISE SHALL UNDERSTAND," Dan. xii. 9, we will, for a moment, consider the language of 1 Peter i. 9 to 12: "Receiving the end of your faith, (that is, the object for which ye believed,) the salvation of your souls." Romans v. 2: "Of which SALVATION the prophets have INQUIRED and SEARCHED DILIGENTLY; searching what, and what manner of TIME (*i. e.* what was the character of the time given to them, literal or symbolical,) the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified BEFOREHAND (THE TIME OF) the SUFFERINGS of Christ, and (the time of,) the glory that should follow."

Peter here affirms that the TIME of the sufferings of Christ, as well as the TIME of the GLORY that shall follow, has been revealed to the prophets BEFOREHAND. Now, as the church and Christ are to be glorified TOGETHER, Rom. viii. 17, WHEN HIS GLORY SHALL BE REVEALED, 1 Peter iv. 13; v. 1; it follows, that the TIME of the first resurrection, and the removal of those who shall be alive and remain, is the time into which the prophets have inquired and searched diligently,—but unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, BUT UNTO US they did minister the things into which even the angels desired to look. 1 Peter i. 12. The prophecy of Daniel, recorded in the eighth chapter, is the only one which gives us the measurement of TIME, extending to the period when Jesus shall be glorified. In the first part of this chapter we have THREE universal empires presented to us under the symbols of the RAM with two horns, the HE-GOAT, and the LITTLE HORN, which waxed EXCEEDING GREAT.

In the thirteenth verse:—"Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto, (the numberer of secrets, or the wonderful numberer—see margin,) HOW LONG THE VISION, (*i. e.* literally, how long the TERM of the vision, or to how distant a period will the vision extend,) of the daily, and the transgression making desolate, (exposing,) both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days, when the sanctuary shall be (justified.)" Here we have the measuring of the times of the Gentiles, commencing somewhere during the reign of the Medo-Persian kingdom, symbolized by the Ram having two horns, (see 20th v.) and ending when the sanctuary shall be declared justified.

The times of the Gentiles having been fulfilled, the church, which is, during this dispensation, the temple or sanctuary of God, (1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 21, 22,) shall be declared justified, by the first resurrection, and the change of those who shall form the household of Christ. Heb. iii. 6. But when the church has been removed, and glorified with Christ her Head, then shall the earthly sanctuary (Jerusalem,) be cleansed; a

work which cannot be commenced UNTIL the end of the days; for Jerusalem is to be trodden down of the Gentiles UNTIL the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. The act of cleansing cannot be commenced until the days of desolation are accomplished.

The next point of inquiry is, at what period of time, during the reign of the kings of Medo-Persia, (the ram power,) does the two thousand three hundred days commence? Let us inquire and search diligently. True to his promise, and to the instructions he had received in ver. 16, (make this man understand the vision,) Gabriel proceeds; ver. 19-26. The Ram is the representative of the kings or kingdom of Medo-Persia. The rough Goat is the kingdom of Grecia. The great horn between his eyes is the first king, Alexander the Great. Alexander was chosen by the Greeks as general, and with an army of 30,000 he overthrew Darius king of Persia, who had an army of 400,000 foot and 100,000 horse. He conquered a part of Europe and all Asia in the short space of twelve years, and then wept that he had not another world to conquer. He died at Babylon, at the age of 33 years, after having resigned himself to a life of intemperance. The four horns which came up after the first horn was broken off, (8th ver.) represent four kingdoms, (20th ver.) Within fifteen years after the death of Alexander, his posterity had either died or were killed, and his kingdom was divided amongst his four generals. Ptolemy Soter took Egypt, with Judea, Phœnicia, &c., in the southern part. Seleucus Nicator had Syria and the East; Lysimachus had Thrace, and Bythinia in the North; and Cassander had Macedonia, Greece, &c., in the West.

Out of one of THEM came forth a LITTLE HORN, that WAXED EXCEEDING GREAT. That this symbolizes ROME will be made apparent in the interpretation, and in the fulfilment, as recorded in history. Rome was a little republic on the Tiber, about 750 years before Christ, but was not noticed in prophecy until it conquered Macedon, one of the horns of Grecia, and was seen emerging "out of," or from that point or kingdom, from which "it waxed great towards the south, (Egypt,) and towards the east, and towards the pleasant land." Rome not only extended

her conquests east, but in 30 B. C. she became mistress of the world,—“EXCEEDING GREAT.” How literally fulfilled!

Rome put the prince of the host, (the Lord Jesus Christ,) to death, destroyed Jerusalem, scattered the Jews, the ancient and covenanted people of God, and destroyed wonderfully the holy people, 50,000,000 of saints having perished by fire, the sword, captivity, and spoil, under the power of papal Rome. Leaving the scenery of the vision, which has now been fully explained, we pass on to notice the TIME of its duration. In the last verse of chapter eighth, we find Daniel saying: “I was astonished at the vision; but NONE UNDERSTOOD it.” Gabriel had not then accomplished his mission, for he was commanded to make Daniel UNDERSTAND it. Ver. 16. What, then, did Daniel not understand? All that he had seen in the vision had been fully and clearly explained, EXCEPT ITS DURATION. Gabriel must, therefore, instruct him, “what, or what manner of time the Spirit did signify, when it testified to him of the sufferings of Christ.” “He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes;” (“and of the glory that should follow;”) “but he shall be broken without hand.”

Each of the kingdoms were represented by symbols. Would it not destroy the symmetry and harmony of the vision, unless the DURATION were represented by symbols also? We find that the following chapter is occupied, to the end of the 19th verse, with the prayer of this man of God; and in the 21st verse, while in the very act of speaking in prayer, Gabriel, whom he had seen in the vision at the beginning, and who was commanded to make him understand it, appeared to him and said: O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee, (literally to improve thee,) in skill and understanding. I am come to show thee; attend, therefore, to the word, that thou mayest understand, and consider the vision.” What part of the vision was it that Daniel did not understand? ITS DURATION ONLY, or the manner or kind of time the Spirit did signify, when he informed them that the TERM or DURATION should be unto two thousand and three hundred days, c. viii. 14.

Now, if it be the object of his mission to give him instruction respecting the understanding of the duration of the vision, we may expect to find that **TIME ALONE** will occupy their attention during this interview. And what are the facts? His very first instruction is on the subject of time. Ver. 24. Seventy weeks are determined (literally, *cut off*;) upon thy people. What part of the vision is he explaining? Most certainly its **DURATION**. Bickersteth construes the passage thus: "**OF THE WHOLE PERIOD** of two thousand and three hundred days, seventy weeks of years are cut off," "to seal up the vision." I would here ask: Is this sealing up, to hide from, or to confirm and make sure the vision? Surely there can be but one opinion on this point. Gabriel was instructed to make him **UNDERSTAND**. Then, if the seventy weeks were cut off to make sure the vision, they must be a part of the **DURATION** of the vision. If they are not a part of the vision, then Gabriel does not instruct him about **THE VISION**, which he was commanded to do. We must, therefore, believe that these seventy weeks are given to confirm (make sure,) the duration of the vision of two thousand three hundred days, and to give us a point from whence to commence them. This being established, there can be but one consistent view taken as regards their true **COMMENCEMENT**. Ver. 25. **KNOW**, therefore, and **UNDERSTAND**. Understand what? When to commence the vision: "From the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the **STREET** shall be built again, and the **WALL**, even in troublous times."

As the first object seen in the vision was the Ram with **TWO HORNS**, representing the kings of Media and Persia, 20th verse, it is reasonable to expect that the command should be given in their reign. Accordingly, we find that, during the reign of these kings, there were **FOUR**, and **ONLY** four decrees issued concerning Jerusalem. Our business will be to inquire which of these decrees answers to the **EXPRESS** requirements of this prophecy, setting forth such literal re-building as is here predicted.

The **FIRST** of these commandments went forth in the

first year of Cyrus, B. C. 536. That this is not the decree referred to by Gabriel, is evident from the substance of it, as it relates **ESPECIALLY** and **ONLY** to the rebuilding of the **TEMPLE**. Ezra i. 1-4. Cyrus took nothing more upon himself than what immediately and only regarded the Temple. "The Lord hath charged me to build him a **HOUSE** at Jerusalem." Neither can these seventy weeks date from the **SECOND** decree, which was granted by Darius Hystaspes, king of Persia, B. C. 519, as this decree relates exclusively to the continuation of the building of the temple began by Cyrus. Ezra vi. "And they builded and finished it, even the **HOUSE** of **GOD**, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king." Verses 14 and 15.

The **THIRD** decree was issued by Artaxerxes, in the seventh year of his reign, B. C. 457; but this decree also does not meet the requirements of the prophecy, inasmuch as it relates **ONLY** to the **ENDOWMENT** of the **TEMPLE**, and not to the building of the **STREETS** and **WALLS** of Jerusalem. See Ezra vii. It then follows of necessity that these seventy weeks must have their beginning from the **FOURTH** and **LAST** commandment issued by these kings of Persia, viz.: From that which purposed **ONLY** to rebuild the **WALL** and **STREETS** of Jerusalem, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia. As there is a **PERFECT** agreement between the commission which the king granted to Nehemiah and the requirement of the prophecy—"The **STREETS** and **WALL** shall be built in **TROUBLOUS** **TIMES**," there is no mention whatever of the **TEMPLE** in this prophecy. The decree of Cyrus was confined to the building of the temple alone; that of Darius was confined to the **FINISHING** of it; that of Artaxerxes, given in his seventh year, was **ONLY** to **ENDOW** the **TEMPLE**. Whereas **THIS**, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, was the **ONLY ONE** which immediately respected the city of Jerusalem and the building of her **WALLS** and **STREETS**, which were immediately rebuilt in pursuance of this commission. Here we see a **PERFECT** and **LITERAL** agreement between the **PROPHECY** and this **DECREE**: taken in such a sense, there never was any other commandment given which meets the requirements of the prophecy. See Neh. ii. Under the authority of this grant to Nehe-

miah, the STREETS and WALLS were built even in TROUBLOUS TIMES.* The only point remaining to be established is to fix the year mentioned, Neh. ii. 1, as the twentieth of Artaxerxes, from which we are to date. This is found by consulting the unerring canon of Ptolemy, which learned men have ever considered "the surest guide we have in chronology, as it is built upon astronomical calculations, and especially as it is also verified by its agreement everywhere with the Holy Scriptures." The learned Dr. Prideaux observes: "The canon of Ptolemy is not to be receded from for the authority of any other writing whatsoever; and, therefore, the learned have not allowed Petavius nor Archbishop Usher their respective liberties taken with this canon in their departure from it. It is called, "Ptolemy's Canon," from Claudius Ptolemaus, a celebrated Alexandrian mathematician. He commences his canon in the year B. C. 747, with the reign of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, giving the names and length of the reigns of the successive Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, Egyptian and Roman kings to his own times, A. D. 137, ending with the reign of Antoninus. This canon being built upon astronomical observations, no year throughout the same can be broken in upon without violation and presumption. Its accuracy is demonstrated by more than twenty dates and computations of eclipses. The learned Bishop Lloyd styles this canon "the undoubted measurer of time among all the astronomers, both Jews and Gentiles." He fixes the first year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, B. C. 464; his twentieth year would therefore be in the year B. C. 445, in 303 of Ptolemy's canon, and 4269 of the Julian Period.

Having now shown that the only decree which fully answers the requirements of the prophecy, Dan. ix. 25,

* It may here be observed, by way of confirmation, that from hence, even from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, as being the true Scripture beginning of these weeks, the ancient learned Christians date their computation of the SIXTY-NINE WEEKS. Africanus Julius, who flourished in the beginning of the third century, Eusebius, Jerome, Theodoret, and after their example many of the modern expositors have done so likewise. Bede, Petavius, Mr. Dodwell, the learned Bishop Lloyd, Doctor Prideaux, and many others, and this is the time fixed for their commencement, as D'Herbelot tells us by Abulfarage.

is that granted to Nehemiah in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, and that the instructions of Gabriel were to give Daniel an understanding as to the DURATION of the vision and the point at which to commence reckoning; and having ascertained from the best authority to which we have access, that the year 445 B. C. is the true time at which to begin the seventy weeks, we are now prepared to see "What manner of time the Spirit did here signify when he testified BEFOREHAND the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow." "Know, therefore, and understand, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks, (making sixty-nine weeks,) the STREETS and the WALL shall be built again, even in troublous times." "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be CUT OFF." Here we see to what point in the life of the Messiah these SIXTY-NINE WEEKS extend—it is to the SUFFERINGS of Christ. What manner of time was it; literal or symbolical? To harmonize with the other portions of the vision, the TIME should be given in symbols also; and so we find it is given. To prove this time we have only to pass down the stream of time, and mark each of the divisions of the seventy weeks here named. *First.* The sealing up or closing of the prophets or prophecy. *Second.* The cutting off of the Messiah. *Third.* The ending of the Jewish dispensation. The first is seven weeks, within which time the prophets were to cease delivering their testimony to this people. Commencing B. C. 445, we pass down forty-nine years, and find the canon of the Old Testament closed by Malachi, 396 B. C. We pass on to the next period, the end of the sixty-two weeks, (added to the seven,) the point fixed for the sufferings of Christ. "Messiah shall be cut off." As this is a disputed time with chronologers, it is sufficient to refer to the declaration of Paul. Rom. v. 6. "In due time," or according to the time, Christ died. See, also, Gal. iv. 4. Again: "Now, before the feast of the passover, Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world." John xiii. 1. The *third* point is the ending of the Jewish dispensation: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people to finish the transgression."

As Paul was especially called to be the apostle of the Gentiles, we may expect to find some point in his history which will mark the close of the seventy weeks, or 490 years. We turn to Acts xiii., and there find him charging upon the Jews a certain prophecy, on account of their rejecting Christ. Ver. 40. "*Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets. Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*" At length they contradict and blaspheme. Ver. 46. "*Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said: It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord.*" Here, then, is the fulfilment of the word of the Lord, A. D. 45, just 490 years after the decree given in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, thus proving that the two thousand three hundred days were only symbols of years. Does not this make the vision *sure*? Can we not understand what manner of time is signified? The next point is the glory that shall follow. 445 B. C. from 2,300 leaves 1855 A. D. But inasmuch as these periods must be made up of *full years*, it is clearly evident that their termination must extend into the year A. D. 1856, just so far as the *going forth* of the decree *entered* into the year B. C. 445; and as Nehemiah made his request unto the king in the *FIRST Jewish month, (Nisan,)* it is reasonable to suppose that the commandment did not go forth for some time afterwards, perhaps two months. The request being made at the feast of the passover, the decree was probably issued about the time of the next festivity—the feast of pentecost. From these premises it follows that the termination of the times of the Gentiles will be at the feast of first fruits, or pentecost, A. D. 1856, in the month *Sivan*, the third of the Jewish year.

"Behold, I will make thee know, or explain to thee, *what* shall be in the *last end* of the indignation; for at

the *time appointed* the end shall be," was the promise of Gabriel. Dan. viii. 19. He proceeds, in Dan. ix. 26, to fulfil this promise. "The people of the prince that shall come, (the Romans,) shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, (Jerusalem and the temple,) and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war it shall be cut off by desolations,"—(*i. e.* Jerusalem shall thenceforth remain trodden down of the Gentiles until *their times* (the 2,300 years,) shall be fully accomplished.) Then *he*, the Prince that shall come, (in the *last end* of the indignation,) shall confirm or make a covenant with many for one week of years, and in the midst or middle of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abomination he shall make it desolate until the *consummation*, when that determined shall be poured upon *the desolator*." Ver. 27. What is it that is determined upon *this* desolator? "*He shall be broken without hand*." Dan. viii. 25. Here we have a brief synopsis of the events to take place immediately after the removal of the church. The person here named "The Prince," I believe, is the present Emperor of France, LOUIS NAPOLEON, who possesses in a remarkable degree the characteristics of the king of fierce countenance, (who is to appear as the *head* of the ancient Roman empire,) "*when the transgressors are come to the full*." See Dan. viii. 23. The expression, in this verse, "of fierce countenance," would be more truly rendered "*of obdurate countenance*;" literally, *one whose firmness of features and complexion betray no emotion, and suffer no secret to be read—a man of imperturbable look*. The Jews will fill up their transgression by receiving him as their Messiah or deliverer—(as foretold by our Lord Jesus: "If another shall come in his own name, *him ye will receive*," John v. 45,)—and making a covenant with him for one week of years, he will confer upon them the privilege of restoring their sacrifices and worship at Jerusalem; but after three and a half years he will break his covenant with them, offer himself to them as the Messiah, and command them to worship him. At this point he will become the *Antichrist* of 2 Thess. ii. 8. "Then shall that *wicked one* be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness

of his coming." Being filled with all the energy of Satan, he will have power to work with signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. xiii. 8. "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not seen since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." Matt. xxiv. 21. The prophecies of Zach. 12th and 14th chapters; Zeph. iii. 8 to 20th ver., and Joel ii., will, during his reign, be fulfilled. This will be the time of "Jacob's trouble; but he shall be delivered out of it" by the appearing of the Lord Jesus and all his saints—in the clouds of heaven coming to Jerusalem. "Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, (led on by THE Antichrist,) as when he fought in the day of battle." "And his feet shall stand in THAT DAY upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east." Zech. xiv. 3 to 5. "But HE (the king of impenetrable countenance,) shall be broken without hand." "He shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

This we believe to be the truth; and believing we rejoice in hope of the glory. Seeing the wonderful harmony on these points, it seems that the hand of God has indeed guarded them, that the wise MAY understand according to his sure promise.

THE SEASON OF THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

The previous remarks will, I trust, have prepared the reader's mind for a careful perusal of the following inquiry into the SEASON of the removal of the church from the earth to meet her Lord in the air.

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose." Eccl. iii. 1.

There are various regulations in the law of Moses respecting the great feasts, which would be of much interest to us, could we in every case discern the precise object in

view. Our Lord says: "that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses." Luke xxiv. 44. Again: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." Matt. v. 17 and 18.

There were three great festivals appointed in the law by Jehovah for the nation of Israel—the passover, the feast of weeks or pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles. On each of these occasions, it was expected of every male person that he should go up to Jerusalem to worship. "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty." Deut. xvi. 16. Each, therefore, of these festivals was a general assembly of the people whom the Lord had chosen as his own inheritance, at the place which he had selected to put his name there. Each of these feasts had a distinctive and peculiar character, referring to the dealings of God with his people, and intended to convey instruction to their minds, to awaken their gratitude for past mercies, and to lead their hopes and expectations forward to prospective blessings.

The first in order was the feast of unleavened bread, or the passover, commemorating their deliverance from Egypt, and prefigured the redemption of the church, by the shedding of the blood of the Lamb. One sheaf was then waved before the Lord, typifying Christ the first fruits of the spiritual harvest. After seven full weeks came pentecost, the feast of weeks, an offering of thanksgiving to the Lord, for the increase of the first fruits of the harvest; thus typifying the ingathering of the church, as the first fruits of the labours of Christ, and represented by the two leavened loaves, in contrast with the unleavened bread, and the pure grain in the sheaf, offered up on the "morrow after the Sabbath," at the passover, which was the beginning of the harvest. See Lev. xxiii. 10 and 11. It is remarkable that these two feasts are so intimately connected, as both to be called the feast of first fruits. Lev. xxvi. 10. "Then

ye shall bring a sheaf (or handful—see margin,) of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest, and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you;” thus showing that the pure unleavened offering of the Lord was accepted by the Father for us. Ver. 17. “Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the first fruits unto the Lord.” Thus prefiguring the intimate connexion that exists between Christ and his church, “which is his body.” These two offerings bounded the harvest, the one being offered at the beginning, the other at the end of the harvest. Christ the “first fruits from the dead,” the first of the new creation, introducing life and immortality to a world under sentence of death, the earnest and the pledge of the resurrection of those who, having been “planted in the likeness of his death,” shall come forth from their habitations when the purpose of God is accomplished, and he shall have taken out of the nations “a people for his name,” and thus the wheat harvest shall then be gathered unto the Lord.

It may be well now, in order more fully to comprehend the purposes of God, as set forth in these two feasts, to dwell more fully on the various points of the law governing their observance, that we may, if possible, ascertain how or when they are to be fulfilled. With respect to the feast of unleavened bread, or the passover, there can be no doubt of its full accomplishment (and that even in the most minute particular,) in the person and work of our blessed Saviour. “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.” 1 Cor. iv. 7.

Let us carefully examine the requirements of the law, and see if every jot and tittle has been fulfilled.

FIRST. Exod. xii. 3. “Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month (the first,) 2d ver., they shall take to them every man a lamb.” So Christ entered into Jerusalem before the passover at which he suffered, on the tenth day of Nisan, the first month. John xii. 1.

SECOND. “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year.” 5th ver. “Whatsoever hath a blemish shall ye not offer, for it shall not be acceptable for you.”

Lev. xxii. 20. So Christ our Lamb was without blemish or spot. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." 1 Peter ii. 22. "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." 1 John iii. 5. "Neither was any deceit in his mouth." Isa. liii. 9.

THIRD. "And ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it, between the two evenings," (see margin,) ver. 6; see, also, Num. ix. 2, 3; as the sun was going down. Deut. xvi. 16. So Christ "by wicked hands was crucified and slain." Acts ii. 23. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together." Acts iv. 27. Here we see the whole assembly gathered together to kill the lamb, and that at the precise time of killing the paschal lamb. "And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said this, he gave up the ghost." Luke xxiii. 44 and 46. See, also, Mark xv. 34-37. See Deut. xvi. 5, 6. Compare Heb. xiii. 11, 12. John xix. 17, 18.

FOURTH. The blood of the lamb was to redeem them from the power of the destroying angel, or angel of death. "And when he seeth the blood, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your house to smite you." Exod. xii. 23. So Christ, through his death, has redeemed his people from the power of him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. Heb. ii. 14. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you." 1 Peter i. 18. "Behold the Lamb of God, which beareth away the sin of the world." John i. 29.

FIFTH. They were all required to eat of it, "every man who desired to be delivered." 4th and 8th verses. So Christ says: "Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." John

vi. 53. That is, unless we partake of the Paschal Lamb in God's appointed way, we shall be left to the power of the destroying angel, the sentence of death being already passed upon us. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;" (because he belongs no longer to the first creation, but to the second.) "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John iii. 36. "He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." John v. 24. Here is the simple truth; by virtue of the work and offering of Christ ALONE we are delivered from the power of the destroyer, death, and by faith we become partakers of the life of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. "I give unto my sheep eternal life." Or, in the beautiful and simple language of John, the beloved disciple: "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John v. 12. He is not redeemed from death: dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return, is still in force against all who have their part in the first creation only.

SIXTH. And ye shall eat it with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand;" 11th verse; to remind them that they were only sojourners in a strange land, waiting for the Lord to come and deliver them. So we who believe in Jesus are exhorted to consider ourselves as only strangers, and pilgrims, and sojourners; we are "not of this world;" our citizenship is in heaven, "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. iii. 20. We are commanded to stand in a waiting position, looking for and constantly expecting deliverance. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; (waiting for the morning light, for the 'day-star to arise.')" And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." Luke xii. 35, 36.

SEVENTH. "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof." Ver. 46. "They brake not his legs;" see John xix. 32, 33. Thus we see that not one jot or tittle did pass away until all was fulfilled, but that Christ, as the Lamb, fulfilled every requirement of the law. Then on the "morrow after the Sabbath," the next ensuing Sabbath; that is, on the appointed first day of the week, when they were

required to offer up the wave sheaf of pure grain, (unleavened,) see Lev. xxiii. 10, 11, Christ rose from the dead, and thus became the wave sheaf, or the "first fruits of them that sleep," 1 Cor. xv. 20,—the very day the law directed the first fruits of the harvest to be waved before the Lord, thus showing that he (Christ) was the substance of this shadow. In him there was no sin, no leaven. The sheaf or handful, (as it reads in the margin,) no doubt prefigured not only the resurrection of the Lord, but also the "multitude of captives" which he delivered in honour of his own resurrection, to show his power over the vanquished enemy. See Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. Eph. iv. 8. "When he ascended up on high, he led a multitude of captives, (see margin,) and gave gifts unto men." With this offering of the wave sheaf no sin-offering was coupled; it was offered only with a meat-offering and a burnt-offering, thus showing the perfection of Christ. "And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he-lamb without blemish of the first year, for a burnt-offering unto the Lord." "And the meat-offering shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savour." Lev. xxiii. 12, 13. "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." Luke iii. 22. Jesus was in himself a sweet savour to Jehovah. Thus we see that Jesus our blessed Lord fulfilled in himself every requirement of the law respecting the first of the three great feasts; the feast of passover or unleavened bread, from the taking of the lamb without blemish, on the tenth day of the first month, until the offering up of the wave sheaf on the morrow after the Sabbath; nor has he left one jot or tittle in any manner unfulfilled.

Fifty days after this came the second great feast, the feast of pentecost or feast of weeks. "And ye shall count unto you, from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete." "Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, (the eighth or resurrection day,) shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord." "Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they

are the first fruits unto the Lord." Here we see the church typified by the leavened oblation of first fruits offered unto the Lord; and here again we see the wonderful union which exists between Christ and his church; for we as well as Jesus are called the first fruits unto the Lord. "We are a kind of first fruits of his creatures, begotten of his own will." Jas. i. 18. And inasmuch as this offering must be mixed and baked with leaven, to fulfil the requirements of the law, it is very clear that it can have no reference to the person or work of the Lord Jesus, for leaven is always in the Scriptures put as the representative of corruption or sin. "The leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy,"—"the leaven of malice and wickedness,"—"the old leaven," are phrases which must instantly occur to the mind of even a superficial reader of the divine oracles; while the warning, "know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and the exhortation, "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven;" and here, let it be remembered, that when the Apostle enjoins the removal of the old leaven, he does not bid us put in the new. His words are, "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are UNLEAVENED." 1 Cor. v. 7. Again, the leaven (a corrupt and hidden thing) which the woman hid in three measures of meal, represents the fearful apostacy which entered into the church in the apostles' days, and which has ever since continued to work secretly, but surely, until it shall end at length in bringing the professing church into that state, when puffed up with pride and riches, she shall say, "I have need of nothing," and Christ the Lord shall "spue her out of his mouth." Rev. iii. 16, 17. Where Christ and his perfect work were set forth by an offering, as we have seen in the feast of the passover, all leaven was most strictly forbidden. Not even any vessel that had contained leaven was, in any manner, to be used, but "ye shall put away leaven out of your houses." Exodus, xii. 15. But when the participation with Christ, of the imperfect human worshippers, to whom evil (however unwillingly) adheres, is what a given offering typifies, (as in the feast of Pentecost,) then, AS THE SYMBOL OF THIS EVIL, was the leaven to be used. No leaven, however, was allowed to be burnt on

God's altar; and so, this offering having sin in it, being "mixed with leaven," could neither stand the test of the fire of the altar, nor be an offering, made by fire, of a sweet savour, unto the Lord; and yet it was to be both offered and accepted: "Ye shall offer it, but it shall not be burnt." Lev. ii. 12. "For ye shall burn no leaven, or any honey, (which also is liable to fermentation or corruption,) in any offering of the Lord, made by fire." The question may be asked, Why or how then were these leavened loaves accepted? Something was offered "with it," for the sake of which the leavened first-fruits were accepted. They offered, with the leavened bread, a burnt-offering, a meat-offering, a peace-offering, and a sin-offering. Lev. xxiii. 17 to 21; Num. xxviii. 26 to 31. For leaven, being found in the oblation of first-fruits, a sin-offering was needed with it; and the priest waved all together. "The priest shall wave them, with the bread of the first-fruits, for a wave-offering before the Lord." Thus we see that the church is blessed and accepted in CHRIST and WITH CHRIST. She is one with Christ. And when the church shall be presented to God, as typified by the wave loaves, she will come, not alone, into his presence, but with the sweet savour of all that Christ has been for her, and with the witness that he has met her sin. For, as truly as the sins of the church are laid upon Christ, so truly is the righteousness of Christ imputed to the believer. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word: that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." Eph. v. 26, 27. "Christ shall present the church faultless, before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy," (Jude, verse 24;)—thus having all the value of his perfect work attached to it. In itself, it cannot stand the trial of God's holiness—for no measure of oil can neutralize the leaven—but in Christ, and with Christ, and for Christ, the church is accepted, even as he is. "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren," saying, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the

church will I sing praise unto thee." And again, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." Heb. ii. 11 to 13. As Christ's death occurred at the Passover, and his RESURRECTION ALONE fulfilled the first wave-offering, the wave-sheaf, have we not every reason to believe and expect, that Jesus will receive to himself the church, represented by the second wave-offering of two loaves? "For we, being many, are one bread and one body." 1 Cor. x. 17,—at the season of the feast of Pentecost—for this type of the two wave loaves has never yet had its anti-type—and as it was only the resurrection of Christ that fulfilled the first wave-offering of the wave-sheaf, it can only be the resurrection of the sleeping ones, and the changes from mortal to immortality, of those who are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, the great life-giver, that can fulfil the second wave-offering of the two loaves: "For we, which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not go before them which are asleep:" "For the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Here we see the whole church—the two loaves—the risen and the changed ones, waved and accepted together, not separately, although two, but "they shall be waved together." Lev. xxiii. 20. The church complete in its head. "Christ, the first-fruits, afterwards (the second FIRST FRUITS) they that are Christ's at his coming."

But again, Pentecost is called the feast of harvest, *i. e.*, the wheat harvest, (for the sheaf at the Passover was barley—barley being ripe much earlier than wheat;) "And the first-fruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in thy field." Exodus, xxiii. 16. Is not the church the first-fruits of the labours, or work of Christ the husbandman? He that soweth the good seed, or wheat, is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed (or wheat) are the children of the kingdom, the harvest (when the first-fruits are to be offered) is the end of the age, or dispensation. Mat. xiii. 36 to 43. "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." James, i. 18.

"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." Eph. i. 12. "These were redeemed from among men, the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb." Rev. xiv. 4.

Pentecost was the birth-day of the church; it was on that memorable day that she first stood forth, and on which the Holy Ghost was first given, Acts, ii. 1, whose great office is to glorify Christ, by testifying, not of himself, but of Jesus, John, xvi. 13 to 15, and thus accomplish the number of the elect, by gathering out the church, during the absence of her Lord, typified by the seven full weeks, or fifty days, between the offering up of the sheaf and two loaves. The church is then the first-fruits of the Spirit, born of the Spirit, sanctified by the Spirit, through the word of truth, and sealed by the Spirit until the day of redemption. Eph. i. 3 to 14. That day of redemption must be the day of Pentecost. Unless this be so, I do not see how or when the type of the two wave loaves can be fulfilled, or its antitype be accomplished, for the church is declared to be the first-fruits of the harvest, or work of Christ; and, the Saviour has declared, "That not one jot or one tittle shall, in anywise, pass away from the law, until all be fulfilled." As the two loaves could only be offered up at that especial time, so, it appears to me, that the only time the church can be offered up, is on the day of Pentecost. Christ rose, as the first-fruits, from the dead, the first quickened by the Spirit of Holiness, the first possessor of the immortal life, the head of his body the church, at the beginning of the harvest, as the wave sheaf of pure grain in the ear. All who are to reign with him FORM the harvest: the two loaves are offered at the end of the harvest. Exod. xxxiv. 22. "And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the first-fruits of wheat harvest."

The company spoken of in the 4th and 5th chapters of Revelation, as in heaven before the opening of the seals, or pouring out of the vials, must undoubtedly be the first-fruits. For "they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests:

and we shall reign on the earth.” Now it is only the first-born who have a right to the priesthood, or kingly authority. See Numbers, viii. 16, 17. And as all cannot attain to the authority of kings and priests, how earnestly ought we to seek, by watchfulness and prayer, to be counted worthy to escape all those things that are coming upon the earth, and thus be privileged to stand before the Son of Man. Luke xxi. 36. Oh! for a more simple faith in the promises of God, through Jesus Christ, to enable us to walk more humbly, and for strength to walk more steadfastly; ever looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our salvation—for he is our storehouse of all blessings and graces. Let not unbelief prevent us from attaining to this privilege. “For to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not. So we see, that they could not enter in because of unbelief: let us, therefore, fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” Heb. iii. 18, 19. The church has not yet entered into her rest; there is, therefore, a fear—a danger of our losing the opportunity of entering in—through a want of faith in the promises of God. Remember, that even after the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt, and God had promised to bring them safely into the land of rest or promise, they all, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, fell in the wilderness, through their unbelief. “Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged.” Deut. i. 21. “Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God.” Verse 26. “Ye did not believe the Lord your God: and the Lord heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying: Surely, there shall not one of this evil generation see that good land which I sware to give unto your fathers, save Caleb and Joshua, who only followed the Lord wholly and believed his word.” See Numbers, chapter xiv. “Now, all these things happened unto them for ensamples, or types; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world have come. Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” 1 Cor. x.

11, 12. "I will, therefore, put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not." Jude, ver. 5. "Now, whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." Rom. xv. 4.

We have now glanced at the various points of the law governing the observance of these two feasts, the pass-over and pentecost; and we have seen how every jot and tittle of the law was fulfilled by our blessed Lord, Jesus Christ, with respect to the first of them. Can we, for one moment, doubt that the second one, the feast of first-fruits, shall not, in every point, receive the same accurate fulfilment? No, the promise of Christ is given; "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, until all be fulfilled: heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." Mat. xxiv. 35. "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." Luke xvi. 17. Before closing, I would remark, that the address of Christ to his spouse or bride, is represented as being given at the season of Pentecost—the season of the Passover being too early, and that of the Feast of Tabernacles being too late—for this language to be appropriate: "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away: for, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." Song ii.

We will now pass on to the consideration of the third, or last of the great feasts—"THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES." This was, in many respects, the greatest and most remarkable of these solemnities, so that it has acquired the title of "THE FEAST," by way of eminence. The law governing the observance of this feast is also found in Lev., 23d chapter, from the 23d verse, to the 44th verse, inclusive, which it will be well to read carefully; and here, I would remark, we find additional proof, that the views we have advanced with regard to the anti-

type, or fulfilment of the feast of first-fruits, must be correct, inasmuch as this feast (the feast of tabernacles) was only celebrated after the harvest and vintage of the earth were ended; and all Scripture agrees in testifying, that the church shall be caught up before the vintage of the earth shall be gathered, even as Noah, and Lot, and Elijah, and the Christians in Jerusalem, were all delivered before the judgments of God descended; so, also, "Because thou hast kept the patient expectation of my coming, I also will keep thee from (or out of) the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the whole habitable globe." Rev. iii. 10.

The offering of the first-fruits, or two wave loaves, marked the ending of the wheat harvest—"Gather the wheat into my garner." The feast of tabernacles marks, not only the ending of the fruits and vintage of the earth, but it was designed as a thanksgiving to Jehovah, after they were all gathered, "At the end of the year." Exo. xxiii. 16. It was appointed to commence upon the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the very next day which followed the conclusion of the FEAST OF TRUMPETS. There can be little doubt, that the feast of trumpets was intended as a prophetic type of the day of the Lord. The trumpet is a military instrument, and is always significant of war. The trumpet was to sound for fourteen days, expressing the duration and tumult of the day of the Lord. Nor is it impossible, as some persons have conjectured, that the fourteen days of the feast of trumpets may indicate the continuance of the day of the Lord fourteen years. But, however this may be, the feast of trumpets was to be immediately succeeded by the feast of tabernacles. And this may be considered beyond question, as a prophetic type, representing to us the progress of those great events which are now fast approaching. Suddenly, even as a thief in the night, shall the Lord remove his church: those that are looking, and waiting, and expecting him shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; and then shall the day of the Lord break out upon a sleeping, careless world, and shall run its disastrous course to the fall of Anti-Christ: every year more dreadful and calamitous than before; and one

judgment crowding upon another. But when Anti-Christ has fallen, and the Lord has begun his reign, then the feast of trumpets shall conclude: the instruments of war shall be succeeded by those of peace. The feast of tabernacles shall then begin; to continue, year after year, through the millennial age. This festival was also preceded, on the tenth day of the month, by the great day of atonement, in which the blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, and the sins of the congregation of Israel were carried by the scape-goat into the land of oblivion. On this solemn day, also, the jubilee trumpet sounded every fiftieth year, and brought back every man to his possessions, and proclaimed the glad tidings of the release of every debtor. The feast of tabernacles could only be celebrated properly after they entered into the land. "And it shall be, when thou art come into the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and POSSESSEST IT, and DWELLEST THEREIN; that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shall put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there (Jerusalem.) And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, THAT I AM COME INTO THE COUNTRY, which the Lord swore unto our fathers, to give us." Deut. xxvi. 1st to 10th verse. Here we see the earthly calling of Israel in contrast with the heavenly calling of the church. Israel, God's earthly people, shall be planted in their own land, as the fruit of the earth. The church, represented by the two wave loaves, shall be removed from the earth, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. The church is only the first-fruit—the earnest of that harvest, which shall be gathered unto the Lord, by the instrumentality of Israel, during the Millennium. "Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them, the riches of the Gentiles, HOW MUCH MORE THEIR fulness." Rom. xi. 12. It was not possible for Israel to keep this feast while in the wilderness, but only after they had entered into and obtained possession of the promised inheritance. While the church is brought into

view so fully, in both the former feasts, particularly in that of the first-fruits at Pentecost, in this she is not seen at all—showing that the feast of tabernacles was designed especially for the children of Israel.

It was on the anniversary of this great feast that Ezra and Nehemiah began anew, after the Babylonish captivity, to keep the law. “From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord,” Ezra iii. 6,—and it appears from Neh. vii. 18, “that since the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day,” (that is, after their restoration to Jerusalem,) they kept this feast in a manner they had never kept it before during their **WHOLE HISTORY**, from their first entry into the promised land until they entered it the second time. It is not a little remarkable, that in the future restoration of Israel, which is promised to take place after the purpose of God is accomplished by the gathering out of the church, “God having visited the Gentiles or nations, and taken *out of them* a people for his name, as the first fruits or earnest of these blessings which he has in reserve for all nations, shall return unto them and fulfil his promise. “After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord.” Acts xv. 16. After they shall have obtained the possession of their own city and land. It is remarkable, that the passover and feast of tabernacles, are the only feasts spoken of in connexion with their future glorious restoration. Our blessed Lord and Saviour has, indeed, promised that his church shall join with him in celebrating the passover, when it will be fulfilled in the kingdom of God, (Luke, xxii. 16,)—and when the whole church or congregation can join together in its celebration, having then been fully delivered from the power of the **DESTROYER—DEATH**; and he shall have clothed them with immortality and eternal life. The feast of first-fruits or pentecost is not mentioned: it will then have been fulfilled. The two loaves having been offered up, the oneness of the church with Jesus, her Lord, will then be fully established and made manifest to all, both in earth and heaven, for ever, even for ever and ever; there will, therefore, be no fur-

ther necessity for the observance of that feast. That which, above all else, marks the difference between the church and Israel, and indeed between the church and the entire population of the millennial earth, is, that the church is blessed **IN CHRIST**, and **WITH CHRIST**. Israel and the millennial nations will be blessed **BY HIM** and under **HIS SWAY**. The church is Christ's body—his bride—and participates thus in his exaltation to be head over all things, both in heaven and on earth. As the body participates with the head of all the vital energies by which the whole is actuated, so will the church, at the appearing of Jesus, be made the partaker of his life; and as the bride participates in all that is possessed by her lord, so is the church, the bride, the Lamb's wife, to participate in his inheritance of all things. The prayer of Jesus will then be answered, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John xvii. 17-24.

The Pentecost, then, will be the church's portion exclusively, redeemed from among men, "the first fruits unto God and the Lamb."

But we find, in the 45th chapter of Ezek., 21st to 25th verses inclusive, that after the children of Israel shall have been brought back, and fully restored to their own land, and the Temple, so minutely described by Ezekiel in the 40th chapter and onward, shall have been built, and its worship restored, particular directions are then given for the observance of both the Passover, in the first month, and the feast of Tabernacles, in the seventh month; but nowhere is there any mention made of the feast of Pentecost or first fruits being observed by Israel after their future restoration, which to my mind is another powerful evidence that the removal of the church is the great antitype of the two wave loaves offered up on the day of Pentecost, when both those who sleep, and those who shall be changed, shall ascend together to meet the Lord in the air. The work of the Holy Ghost will then be fully completed, and he himself be withdrawn from the world; the number of the elect be accomplished. The wheat harvest being fully ripe, shall be gathered into his garner into a place of security, and there preserved in

safety until the vintage of the earth shall have been fully ripened under the reign of Antichrist. (See Isa. xxvi. 20, 21.) The fruit of the earth (man's wickedness) having become fully ripe, the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle, shall thrust in his sickle and reap the harvest and vintage of the earth, as described by John, Rev. xiv. 14 to 20; Joel iii.; Isa. lxiii. 1 to 6. After which, he himself shall bring again the captivity of his people Israel. "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. But the Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north countries whither I had driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land." Jer. xxiii. 5 to 8. After the Lord shall have thus restored them, we find that the Lord himself shall reign over them at Jerusalem; and when the Jewish temple shall have been rebuilt, there shall be daily sacrifices offered in Jerusalem by Jewish priests assisted by actual Levites. But these sacrifices shall not be offered like the ancient sacrifices, as an atonement for sin, but rather as an acknowledgment that, even during the Millennium, when Satan is bound, and there shall be no tempter, men are still sinners,—the difference between these future sacrifices and all past sacrifices being that the ancient Jewish sacrifices were intended, through Christ, to obtain forgiveness for unpardoned sin; while the millennial Jewish sacrifices will be an acknowledgment of the grace of God on account of sins already pardoned. We also observe that, in the passage above referred to, (Ezek. xlv.) the sacrifices at the great festivals are very different from those mentioned in Lev. xxiii., and may we not from this justly conclude, that a difference in the sacrifices is a proof of a difference or change in the intention of that sacrifice. The Lamb of God having taken away the sin of the world, a lamb is no longer to be killed at the pass-over; but in its place, "upon that day, (when their final deliverance having been fully completed, is to be called to mind,) shall the prince prepare for himself, and for all the people of the land, a bullock for a sin-offering." Ezek. xlv. 22. There is no further need for a lamb to be then

offered up, Jesus having offered *one sacrifice for sin for ever*. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." And so, also, in the feast of tabernacles, "in the seventh month, in the fifteenth day of the month, shall he do the like in the feast of seven days." Ezek. xlv. 25. When once the Lord shall have returned to mount Zion, he will bring down heaven along with him, upon the earth, and spread the life and motion of celestial things throughout all the recesses of the globe. He will restore the tribes of Israel to their renowned and sacred land; rebuild Jerusalem as the capital of the world, and the joy of the whole earth; raise the temple from its ruins to more than its ancient splendour, and fill its sanctuary with the brightness of his own presence. Then shall it be truly said: "The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him." All the nations of the globe shall be attracted by the fame of his august dominion. They shall tell it out among the nations that the Lord is King, and that he shall judge the people righteously; and this report shall bring up all nations to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts; and thus shall the feast of tabernacles especially be Israel's portion—a feast of thanksgiving for the mercies and blessings of God to them, in preserving them, and in restoring them again to their own land. Yet this beautiful display of the mercies of God to Israel is not to be hidden from the Gentiles. "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal. i. 11. All nations are invited, and even commanded to attend; and severe judgments are denounced on all those who shall refuse the invitation. For "it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year, to worship the King the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." "And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain." Zech. xiv. 16, 17. The nations will thus be compelled to choose between famine and obedience. "And

if the family of Egypt go not up, (who in the course of nature do not require rain,) there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord shall smite the heathen that come not up to the feast of tabernacles." These words clearly prove that, during the millennial period, there will be refractory nations, and national judgments. The reign of Christ is, in fact, a *period of transition*. It is a transition from the government of man to the government of God. Man has governed the world for 6,000 years, and everything has become worse and worse, and shall continue to grow worse and worse, until "he come whose right it is to reign." After the millennial reign a new earth shall arise, in which God shall be all in all, and then everything will be perfect as well as everlasting. But in the interval between the two, the reign of Christ comes in, which is a period of transition, and therefore combines the imperfections of the former state with the perfections of the latter state, and partakes partly of the nature of the kingdom of man, and partly of that of the kingdom of God—the imperfections being in the persons governed, not in the Governor himself. For this reason the millennial reign is placed, not under the government of a mere man, nor under that of God only; but, as a transition state, it is placed under one who is both God and man—the man Christ Jesus—the two-fold nature of the sovereign corresponding exactly to the two-fold character of the period itself. The residence of the Lord, and of the glorified saints, is in heaven, not upon earth. The new Jerusalem, the heavenly city, will be the capital of this new empire, and the whole earth will constitute the territory. From the council-chamber of the Jerusalem above, the decrees of government will be transmitted to the Jerusalem below, and to all the world; and they will be enforced by irresistible power. We have the express declaration of Scripture, that the glorified saints shall exercise authority over all the earth. "The kingdom and the dominion, under the whole heavens, shall be given to the saints of the Most High." The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and shall possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." Dan. vii. These words admit of no question; they assign, beyond doubt, a degree of power

and dignity to the glorified saints, which surpasses the highest authority of man: and this power is to continue for ever. The Lord himself being the fountain of honour, the glorified saints are invested by him with varieties of dignity and power. Each man will be advanced according to his merits, and according to his former labours; and then shall be realized what we so often find in the Scriptures—salvation is of grace, free sovereign grace—but “A reward according to works.” One saint will be appointed over ten cities; and one, less distinguished by zeal in the present life, will be rewarded, in the life to come, with the inferior government of only five cities: but every man will receive his reward: every one of them shall have a part in the universal empire. No doubt, many an obscure saint, who passed unnoticed through this world, who labours for his daily bread, will, hereafter, be appointed governor over the very district in which he once toiled through life as the meanest of mankind; and will govern, with supreme authority, where once he was regarded as a slave! Thus, the saints who shall be gathered as the first-fruits, share with the blessed Jesus in his exaltation; they, as well as he, shall govern where once they served; they shall be honoured where once they were despised. The beggar shall be raised from the dunghill, set among princes, and made to inherit a throne of glory.

In view of all these glorious promises to the church and to the world, can there be one saint who really loves the Lord Jesus, who will not exclaim, “Even so come, Lord Jesus! and come quickly.” Let this groaning creation speedily be delivered; the precious sleeping ones awake to immortal life; the living ones be changed; “this corruptible put on incorruption, this mortal be clothed with immortality;” the two wave loaves be offered; the feast of first-fruits be fulfilled; the glorious anthem be sung, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.” Even so, amen. Come, Lord Jesus, and come quickly.

“And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”—ISA. XL. 5.

Behold the mountain of the Lord
In latter days shall rise
On mountain tops above the hills,
And draw the wond’ring eyes.

To this the joyful nations round,
All tribes and tongues shall flow—
“Up to the hill of God,” they’ll say,
“And to his house we’ll go.”

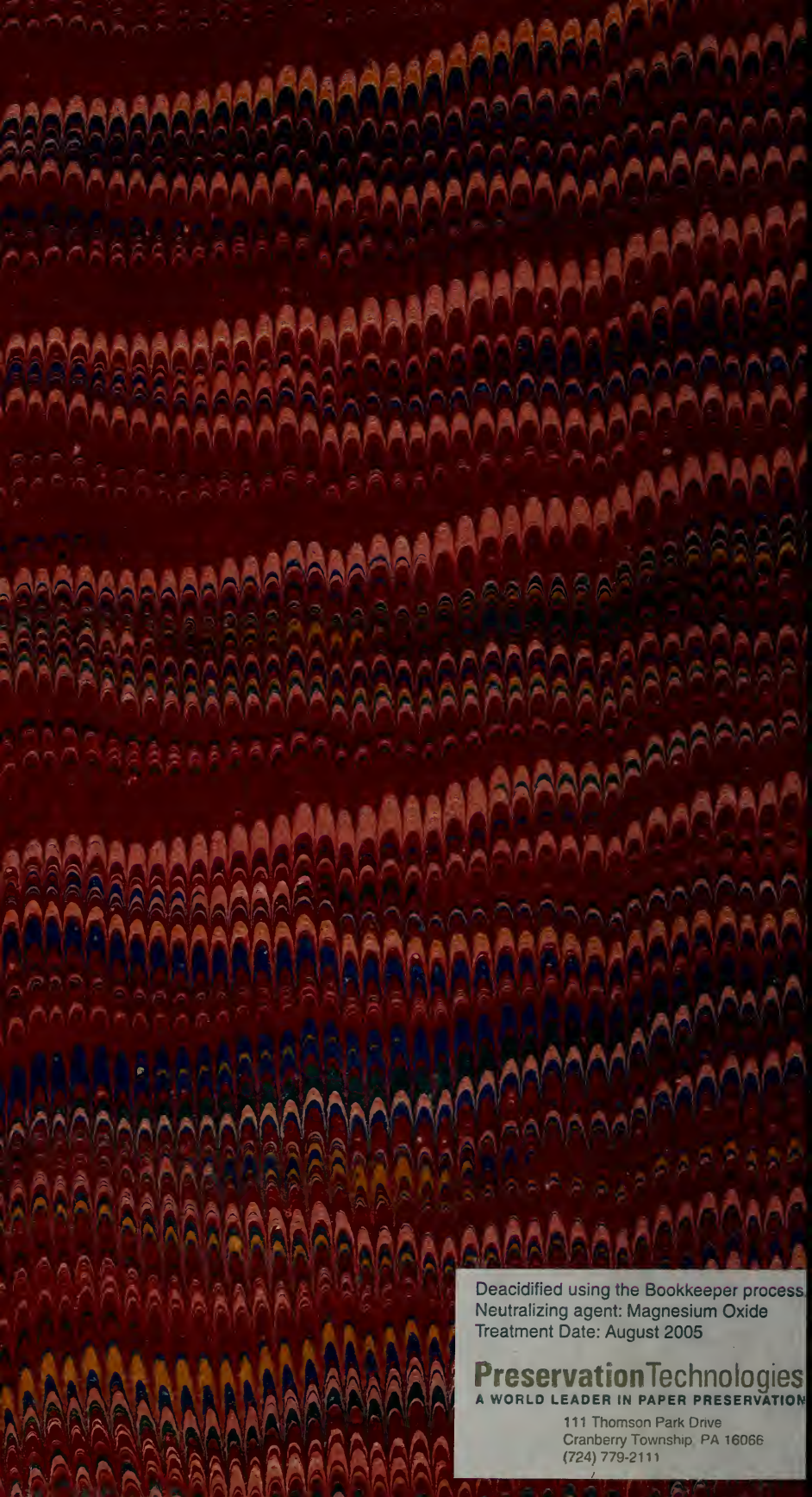
The beam that shines from Zion’s hill
Shall lighten every land:
The King who reigns in Salem’s tower
Shall all the world command.

But blessings, far surpassing all
The joys of earth below,
His chosen Bride redeem’d from earth,
His risen Church, shall know.

This is her bright and blessed hope,
To dwell with Christ above,
To share his throne, and fully know
The secrets of his love.

One with himself, ’tis hers alone
To reign in glory there;
And, to the sons of men below,
His blessed name declare.

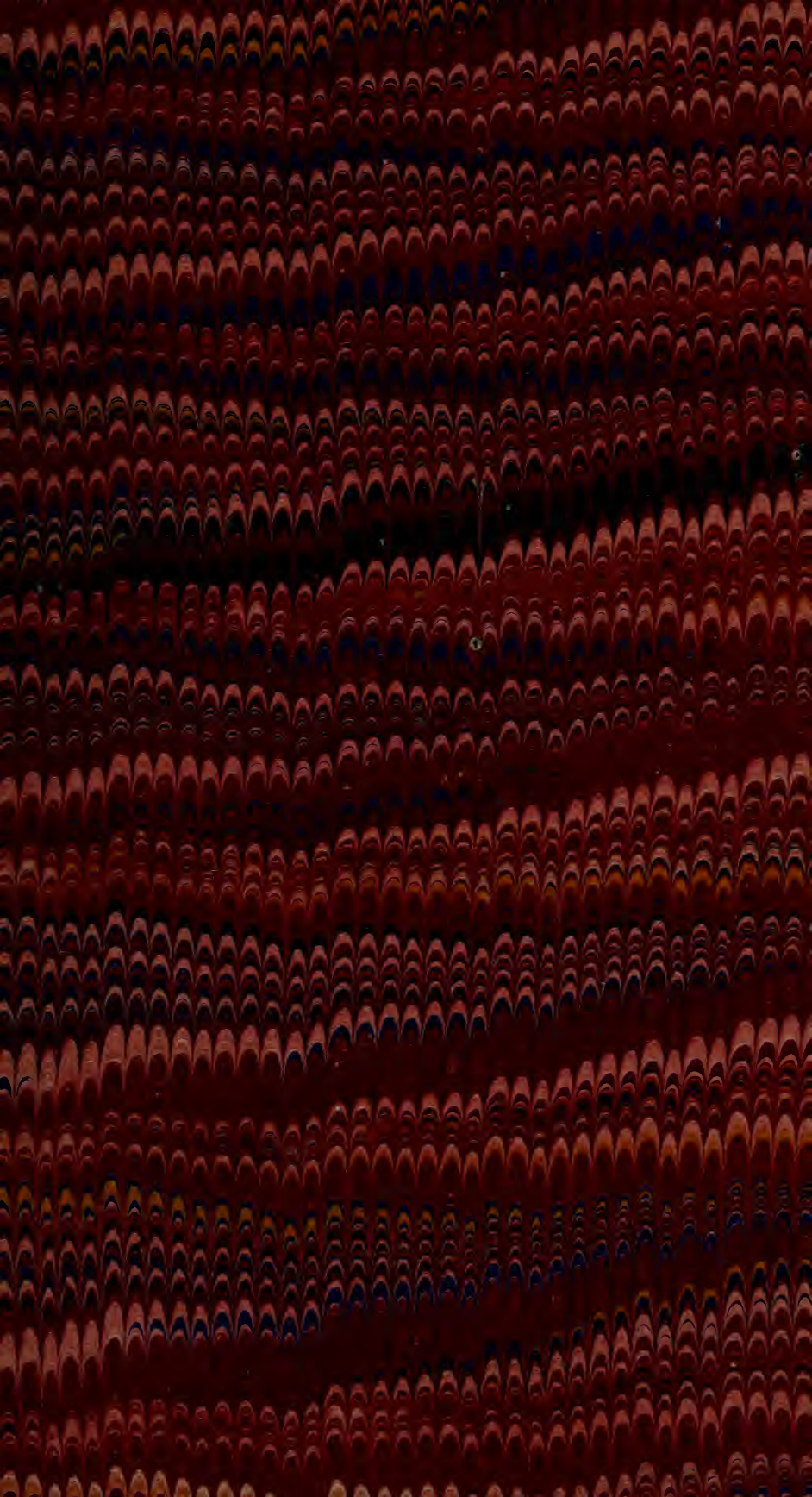
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